

Poems

IN PRAISE OF OLD MEN'S PEE

"I finally peed," my father wheezes
from his bed on the fifth floor
of St. Francis Hospital.

He holds up the sample
of precious yellow liquid
which has spilled all over his bottle.

"Great, Dad, keep peeing," I grin
as a male nurse measures
the cloudy liquid.

Bless pee and all men's penises;
old football coaches,
Japanese architects,

young truck drivers, all
with catheters hanging out,
stumbling about, backside showing,

some frontside too,
but mostly bless my father:
Pee for me, Dad, and all fathers

who changed pissy pants
of sons and daughters,
especially daughters; all men

we no longer hear or read about
who never abused us or hurt us,
who gave us their manly gifts

of strength and wisdom,
who loved us
gently with compassion.

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ELEVENTH HOUR

All his old friends
old mistresses
Mag and Dulcie and Jan
gathered together
in the gallery of his brain
as if for a last
showing after which
the canvases will be
packed away
and forgotten

and the nurse
so young so pretty
standing
with her tray of pills
ready to share space
with Jan and Mag and Dulcie

his mind blurring
the noise of clocks
his brush
almost within reach
the colors perfect
Venetian red
gamboge
that best of all blues
the one called Capri

and his brain throbbing
with all the things
he has left to say
until
drifting asleep
and later still later
waking
to find the colors
drying in the tubes
and the women gone
and everything
still unsaid.

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